DIVISION OF CEMETERIES
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KATHY HOCHUL
GOVERNOR

CEMETERY BOARD
WALTER T. MOSLEY
SECRETARY OF STATE
CHAIR
LETITIA JAMES
ATTORNEY GENERAL
JAMES V. MCDONALD, M.D., M.P.H.
COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH

Cemetery Board Minutes
July 14, 2026

Department of State
One Commerce Plaza, 99 Washington Avenue, Room 505
Albany, New York 12231

Office of the Attorney General
44 South Broadway
White Plains, NY 10601

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:
Michael Morris, Department of State, Chair
Stephanie Gilman, Department of Health
Jill F. Faber, Office of the New York State Attorney General

OTHER ATTENDEES:
Zakir Ahmed, Division of Cemeteries
John Fatato, Department of State
Kerry McGovern, Division of Cemeteries
Jessica Rosario, Division of Cemeteries
Jonathan Toews, Division of Cemeteries
Robert Vanderbles, Department of State
Rachel Eisenberg, Department of State
Sarah Levin, Division of Cemeteries
Lewis Polishook, Division of Cemeteries
Michael Seelman, Division of Cemeteries
Steven Troutman, Division of Cemeteries
Alicia Young, Division of Cemeteries

GUESTS:
David F. Fleming, Featherstonhaugh & McCardle, NYSAC
Arthur Rodriguez, Green-Wood Cmty.
Gary Collison, for Riverhurst Cemetery
Mary Marshall
Nate Romagnola, White Haven Mem. Pk.
Adam Ginsberg, Mount Hebron Cmty.
Bill Jenkins, Town of Colonie
Jason Hirschhorn
Robert Welch

Opening Remarks

Chairman Michael Morris called the meeting to order at 10:44 a.m. Chairman Morris introduced himself and the other board members.

26-07-A-39 – Minutes of Previous Meetings

A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously adopted approving the minutes of the Board's June 9, 2026, meeting, as submitted to the Board.

26-07-B-40 – Legislation and Regulation

1. Pending Legislation

Division Counsel Robert Vanderbles referred the Board to the published Legislative Report.

2. Regulations

Mr. Vanderbles reported that counsel and Division staff continue to work on potential rule revisions.

26-07-C-41 – Division Report

Division Director Lewis Polishook updated the board on staffing within the Division. Director Polishook welcomed Jon Toews, Auditor in Albany, to the Division of Cemeteries team. We have filled two Syracuse positions (an Auditor and an Investigator) and the new staff are scheduled to begin within 30 days. We have two auditor and one investigator positions still open; one is the subject of an active canvass and the other two await a canvass.

Director Polishook highlighted community outreach programs. Cemetery trainings can be found on our website.

Finally, Director Polishook noted the passing of the Division's long time Assistant Director, Chester Butkiewicz and Robert Vanderbles noted the passing of Senior Deputy Counsel David Gonzalez.

26-07-D-42 – Vandalism, Abandonment and Monument Repair or Removal Fund Report

Assistant Director Alicia Young referred the Board to the previously-circulated Vandalism Report.

There are four applications for funds from the vandalism fund before the Board at this meeting.

Clayton Cemetery, No. 23-006 (Jefferson), $49,192.36

This cemetery seeks funds to repair 32 dangerous monuments. After discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and unanimously adopted approving the application by this cemetery for funds to repair these dangerous monuments for a total cost of $49,192.36, subject to availability of funds.

The discussion of this application can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 7:44-10:37.

DeRuyter Cemetery, No. 27-003 (Madison), $19,931.74

This cemetery seeks funds to repair 29 dangerous monuments. After discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and unanimously adopted approving the application by this cemetery for funds to repair these dangerous monuments for a total cost of $19,931.74, subject to availability of funds.

The discussion of this application can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 10:38-13:10.

Riverside Cemetery, No. 38-035 (Oswego), $18,863.37

This cemetery seeks funds to repair 11 dangerous monuments. After discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and unanimously adopted approving the application by this cemetery for funds to repair this dangerous monument for a total cost of $18,863.37, subject to availability of funds.

The discussion of this application can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 13:11-15:37.

Nassau Schodack Cemetery, No. 42-024 (Rensselaer), $64,639.93

This cemetery seeks funds to repair 49 dangerous monuments. After discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and unanimously adopted approving the application by this cemetery for funds to repair this dangerous monument for a total cost of $64,639.93, subject to availability of funds.

The discussion of this application can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 15:38-18:10.

26-07-E-43 – Riverhurst Cemetery, No. 04-027: PM Loan, Land Purchase, Major Alteration, New Crematory

The cemetery seeks approval for a project involving the opening of a new crematory, which involves multiple approvals: a land purchase, a new crematory, a major alteration, and a recommendation on a PM loan. The document posted regarding this application was incorrect and this application cannot be addressed at this meeting.

After discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and unanimously adopted tabling the application.

The discussion of this application can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 18:11-21:48.

26-07-F-44 – Hillside Cemetery, No. 23-019: Determination of Abandonment

The Division has prepared and issued a determination that this cemetery is abandoned because it no longer has a board or sufficient funds to maintain the cemetery. A meeting was held and no one was willing to serve on the board, and there are no remaining board members.

After discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and unanimously adopted confirming the Division's determination that the cemetery is abandoned.

The discussion of this application can be found in the video recording of this meeting at 21:49-27:05.

Public Comment

David Fleming, representing NYSAC, expressed his appreciation for previous Division Assistant Director, Chet Butkiewicz and Senior Deputy Counsel David Gonzalez.

A special Board meeting is scheduled for July 20, 2026, at 12:00 p.m., to address Riverhurst Cemetery's tabled application, at One Commerce Plaza, in Albany and the NYS Attorney General's Office in White Plains.

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for August 11, 2026, at 10:30 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 11:14 a.m.